



## Diamond Series



### Sojourn Cellars

After the infamous dot-com crash of 2000, many in the high tech world were left scrambling. Amidst the bust, however, came a very unexpected success story that is the basis for this month's *Diamond Wine Club* selection, Sojourn Cellars.

Ex-computer software salesman Craig Haserot decided to move to Sonoma County after the crash, hoping to pursue a new career path while escaping the cold weather of San Francisco. Haserot began playing tennis at the local Maxwell Farms Regional Park and struck up a friendship with doubles partner, Erich Bradley, who was then the winemaker at Arrowood Winery and Audelssa (both in Sonoma). Bradley specialized in producing Cabernet Sauvignon from select local vineyards.

Haserot and Bradley bonded over their passion for Pinot Noir, and began playing with the idea of making their own wine. Haserot had the background in sales and marketing, while Bradley was happy just making wine – without all the business details. It was the beginning of a wonderfully successful friendship and business partnership.

In 2001, the two made 150 cases of project Cabernet from Sonoma's Glen Ellen vineyard and the finished product was better than they ever could have anticipated.

"When we released the Cab, it was actually really good and we realized there was potential with our wines," Haserot explained. "The following year, we upped the Cab production to 250 cases and then to 350 cases in 2004."

With Bradley's experience in making Sonoma Cabs, it was only natural that Cabernet Sauvignon would be the first endeavor for Sojourn Cellars, but it wasn't long before their love for Pinot Noir led to new experimentation.

"Our real passion was always Pinot, so in 2004 we decided to make 210 cases of Sangiacomo Vineyard Pinot Noir," Haserot stated. This first Pinot release took home 95 and 92-point ratings and really set the stage for the caliber of wines produced thereafter.

What Haserot and Bradley didn't anticipate was the reaction 2004's *Sideways* movie would have on the California Pinot Noir industry. "Our sales literally took off!" Haserot enthused. The two increased their Pinot production tenfold and what started out as an avid hobby had become an incredibly successful business move.

When Haserot and Bradley brainstormed names for their budding winery, a friend aptly suggested Sojourn, which actually has two significant meanings: the French sojourner refers to a journey, vacation or road trip, while the English sojourn implies rest, relax and respite.

"That's how we came up with the lawn chair," Haserot explains about the wine label's simplistic depiction. "People really like it, too. It's how drinking a glass of wine should be."

Sojourn Cellars' celebrated Tasting Salon concept in downtown Sonoma further promotes the winery's appealing philosophy with a living room-type setting of cozy furniture and a dining room table (no tasting bar). Both Haserot and Bradley join guests for private tasting sessions to share their limited production, highly rated wines. The Tasting Salon is certainly unique in its personal approach to wine tasting, and the customers seem to be enjoying themselves as well.



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At a current production level of 5,000 cases, Haserot is comfortable with the size of Sojourn Cellars and would like to only slightly increase the production size in the coming years. Please enjoy this month's special *Diamond Wine Club* feature, a stellar wine from a legendary winery.

Cheers!

Craig Haserot –  
Proprietor

## Accolades and Tasting Notes



Sojourn 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon, Beckstoffer Georges III  
350 Cases Produced

**94-Points** – *Robert Parker, The Wine Advocate* — “Sojourn Cellars, the iconic site of Georges III has produced the deep ruby/purple 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Beckstoffer Vineyard from Rutherford. Loads of earth crème de cassis, licorice and spice characterize this rich, full-bodied wine, which emanates from what is obviously one of the great terroirs of Napa Valley. This is a beauty of purity, richness and stunning ripeness. Accessible now, it should hit its prime in 3-4 years and last for 25.”

**94-Points** – *Wine Enthusiast Magazine* — “There’s an abundance of length and grace at the heart of this otherwise powerfully rich and rewarding wine, 100% varietal and aged in 75% new French oak. Classic notes of red currant and burly, polished tannin find balance in soft acidity and a silkiness on the palate.”

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*Tasting Panel Magazine*  
**94-POINTS** — Cellar Selection,  
*Wine Enthusiast*  
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Sojourn 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon,  
Beckstoffer Georges III

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